

5/27/80
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FADRC
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS
May 27, 1980

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The Honorable Edmund S. Muskie
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

On behalf of the UAW, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State. I hope the UAW will be able to work with you in the future, to further those liberal goals and policies we share.

It is about one of those goals I would like to direct your attention to now.

The UAW believes that one of the most important foreign policy initiatives of the Carter Administration to date has been that of human rights. At a time when Americans had become cynical and self-doubting, the Administration's human rights initiatives renewed our pride and sense of purpose.

We fear that policy is now in jeopardy. We have heard disturbing reports that the State Department is preparing to upgrade its relations with Argentina. Since Argentina is one of the worst human rights violators in the hemisphere, such a change in policy would send an unfortunate signal to other countries in the region -- at a time when they are looking for signs of policy change. If new policy directions are to be set, I hope they will not be set in the area of human rights. Argentina, in effect, will be seen as a litmus test of such a change.

In 1979, the State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices documented the use of torture, "disappearance", murder and assassination, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and other unconscionable practices on a massive scale, by the Argentine government. Amnesty International has provided much more graphic descriptions of these abuses. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has reported on the government's attempt to destroy the labor movement, and its violation of several ILO conventions. It is now likely the American trade union delegation to the ILO annual conference in June will join the rest of the free trade union movement in challenging the Argentine trade union delegation's credentials to the conference.

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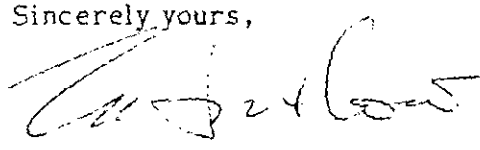
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Most recently, the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued a devastating report on the status of human rights in Argentina. The Commission called on the Argentine government, among other things, to open investigations into the thousands of murders and "disappearances", and to indict those responsible; inform the families of the disappeared of their whereabouts and status; end the state of siege; end the use of cruel and degrading treatment of prisoners; and allow prisoners the right of habeas corpus.

The UN has also made procedural recommendations on steps to deal with the issue of disappearances.

In view of the uniformly damning critiques being issued by so many diverse international bodies, the UAW believes it would be a mistake for the US to soften its policy toward Argentina at this time. It would seem to us more appropriate to wait for some positive action on the recommendations urged by the OAS and the UN. Any other course will only serve to undermine our whole human rights policy.

Sincerely yours,



Leo Suslow, Director
International Affairs
Department

Cc. Mr. Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State
Mr. William Bowdler, Director of Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Ms. Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

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